



(U) SID Around the World: Life in the Field

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(U//FOUO) When I was asked to write about life in the Field, for "SID Around the World", my only challenge was to keep my comments to a few paragraphs. I arrived at NSA/CSS Europe (NCEUR), Cryptologic Applications Directorate (F26), in Stuttgart, Germany, just over a year ago as the Chief of Staff. Although I started my career as a SIGINTer, I had been managing training and HR organizations for several years. Coming to NCEUR has allowed me to re-enter, at least in part, the SIGINT world. The Cryptologic Applications (CAapps) Directorate is co-located with, and provides support to, the U.S. European Command HQ, on Patch Barracks.

(U//FOUO) This is my fifth overseas assignment, having served one tour in Korea on active duty, two tours as a military spouse in Greece and Japan, and two as an NSA civilian in England and Germany. As a result, I can say authoritatively that the best part of life in the field is travel. Stuttgart is in a great location since we can travel to most of Germany, as well as France, Switzerland, or Austria in a matter of a few hours. The rest of Europe is easily and inexpensively accessed as well. As a single parent with a daughter in college, my daughter also benefits from my tour abroad since she is able to spend her Christmas and summer breaks in Europe. In one year she has already traveled with me to England, France, Switzerland, Italy and the Netherlands. We still have two years to go!

(U) Each country I have lived in has had a slightly, or sometimes radically, different lifestyle. However, the common thread has been that I have learned to respect other ways of life, and learned that "our" way is not the only way. A Field experience is a tremendous benefit for kids and is something that will impact them their entire life. They learn to appreciate differences and become more flexible - both excellent life skills!

(U//FOUO) I was asked what I will miss most when I leave Stuttgart. I think I will miss the friends that I have made here, and will continue to make throughout my tour. When you work in the field, you not only work with your colleagues, but tend to socialize with them as well. Although some might not agree, I believe life in the Field creates a stronger bond than a traditional work relationship. Although that is not everyone's "cup of tea", I have found my most rewarding friendships have been those from my field tours. I have had a wonderful 18-year career at the Agency, but can say without hesitation that my Field experiences have been the greatest benefit of my career.



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